Note: The Education Report can be viewed online at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/report/

Issue No. 39

In The News

B.C. a Big Part of Canadian Conversation on Literacy

Premier Invites B.C. Literacy Award Nominations

B.C. Provides More School Support for Young Refugees

Minister Responds to Cowichan Valley School District

B.C. Partners with District, SFU Trust on New School

Contact Information

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9045 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 9E2

Telephone:
250-387-1977

Fax:
250-387-3200

E-mail:
minister.educ@gov.bc.ca

Links

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Message from Minister Shirley Bond

Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Education

I'm pleased to present this special literacy issue of the Education Report, including details on the recent Pan-Canadian Interactive Literacy Forum.

Thanks to the vision of Premier Gordon Campbell, literacy is a priority in British Columbia. From providing books to every baby and young learner in B.C. to tuition free adult basic education, we're working to ensure that every British Columbian has the opportunity to develop and improve literacy skills.

These programs support ReadNow BC, the Province's literacy action plan that promotes the idea that each unique community in our province is in a position to share some expertise and learn from others while assessing its needs, coordinating its efforts, and making strategic investments in literacy. That's why the Province expanded the mandate of boards of education to include coordinating and fostering further cooperation among literacy service providers and initiatives.

To support the expanded mandate of boards of education, we've invested $5 million in literacy innovation grants to school districts for each of the last four years, and we're providing $38 million to expand StrongStart BC to 400 early learning centres. Since 2001, the Province has invested more than $136 million in new literacy programs and services.

Together, we will make an even bigger difference, person by person, and community by community. Read more.

B.C. Takes the Lead on Literacy in Canada

The first-ever Pan-Canadian Interactive Literacy Forum took place earlier this week in Vancouver and at eight other sites across the country, all connected in real time thanks to webcasting technology proven here in British Columbia. The goal of this first-of-its-kind forum was to start a search for cooperative solutions to support the millions of adult Canadians who struggle with low levels of literacy.
Read more.

Education Minister Shirley Bond opened the Pan-Canadian Interactive Literacy Forum by addressing 350 people on site in Vancouver and a total of 3,500 Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

HOT TOPIC

Approximately nine million adult Canadians struggle with low literacy levels, including five million who have trouble with everyday reading and writing tasks. These individuals may be unable to fill out job applications, and are twice as likely to be unemployed. They may be unable to understand the instructions on a prescription bottle. And they may lack the confidence to read to their children and help them succeed in school.

Because literacy affects individuals and families so profoundly, it also determines the strength and prosperity of communities, the province, and this country. That's why British Columbia has taken the lead on literacy for the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). And, through CMEC, Canada's education ministers have created a literacy action plan to raise awareness about the importance of improved literacy levels, and to improve literacy skills from coast to coast to coast.

This literacy action plan stresses sharing successful literacy policies, research, statistics and data, and teaching resources for learners of all ages. To get started, Canada's provinces and territories organized a first-of-its-kind event: the Pan-Canadian Interactive Literacy Forum, which was held April 14-15, 2008, and used webcasting to broadcast real-time streaming video and connect 3,500 learners, literacy experts and representatives from the education, non-profit, business and labour sectors at sites around the country.

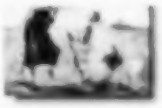
That technology is now being used to leave a legacy of resources online, ranging from speaker presentations, including PowerPoint and video clips, to learning resource packages that will benefit educators, learners, literacy providers, and all Canadians for years to come. And B.C. has already established a legacy piece: an online community for further sharing.

Low literacy levels are a far-reaching issue, but one British Columbia is helping tackle at the community, provincial and pan-Canadian levels. Read more.

Reading Corner

There was a time when Sarie dreaded school. Unable to read, she often felt ashamed and angry, and as if the world were closing in around her.

Then, one day, she found a book and an old woman who pledged that they would read it together. With new skills and growing confidence, Sarie started to look forward to school, and saw the world as a place full of possibility. This book is suitable for readers in grades K–3.



Once Upon a Time
Niki Daly